

# WORKS

## LOCAL THEATRE FEST TURNS 10 AND DEVELOPS AN ATTITUDE

**I**t's time to celebrate. SummerWorks is turning 10, and incoming artistic producer Franco Boni is marking the anniversary with a few changes. In addition to the 24 lottery winners, Boni's invited 10 companies to create productions for the T.O. theatre fest. Plus, you won't have to cross town to get to your favourite show. All the action's centred around the Bathurst/King area.

Back again is the SummerWorks prize for best original production. And don't forget to have your say — drop off your ticket stubs at fave shows to select the winner of the second NOW Audience Choice Award.

Here are NOW's picks of sizzling SummerWorks shows.

## PREVIEWS

### Farmland Safari

**LAMBTON, KENT**, by Andre Alexis, directed by Ross Manson, with Yanna McIntosh. Presented by Volcano at Factory Studio. Aug 5 at 12:30 pm, Aug 6 at 2 pm, Aug 7 at 12:30 and 8 pm, Aug 12 at 3:30 pm, Aug 13 at 2 pm.

**Solo** **Yanna McIntosh** can be excused for feeling slightly dislocated these days. By day she's been rehearsing and performing **Andre Alexis'**s monologue **Lambton, Kent**, in which she plays an African anthropologist lecturing on the quaint habits of southwestern Ontarians. By night she changes tone and gender, becoming the self-involved, swaggering Petruchio in the Dream in High Park's Shrew.

How does she manage not to go schizoid in the process?

"I've discovered the personal luxury of an afternoon nap," she laughs during one of her few free moments. "It's a wonderful invention, and I make use of it every single day."

McIntosh releases theatrical energy the way most people perspire on a muggy August day. I first saw her in productions at University College in the late 80s, where her Medea lodged itself firmly in my memory.

Since then she's spent three seasons at

Stratford, won a Dora award for her performance in Valley Song and was nominated for two others, most recently the title role in Belle.

She has appeared in shows as diverse as A Fertile Imagination and Jacob Two-Two Meets The Hooded Fang, and even co-wrote her own Fringe hit, Trace.

In Lambton, Kent — a shortened version of a play originally produced in 1995 — Trillium Prize winner Alexis looks at rural Ontario culture from an unexpected perspective.

A black anthropologist, Dr. Katherine M'Tubu, applies the same scientific rigour to her field studies as did white investigators to African cultures in an earlier era, and comes up with some outlandish conclusions. It's like the view from an inverted microscope.

"She begins as the impartial observer — a really, really good scientist bent on accuracy and precision," explains McIntosh. "But she ends up as someone who's emotionally affected by what she's been exposed to, and of course that undermines the exactness of what she studies. One sign of the change is how frequently, by the end, she turns to poetry to explain herself."

"The piece is also about the experience of being a stranger. You can be an immigrant or a foreigner, on the outside looking in, even though you may feel part of a culture."

That viewpoint accounts for much of the piece's humour, which ranges from the subtle to a Monty Python-esque bizarre. M'Tubu can never be a true observer of the experience, because she affects it by being part of it. Some of her conclusions about the social and cultural practices of small-town natives are ridiculously comic.

And playing two figures in a single day?

"At first I was apprehensive about tackling both. But it's neat to have two roles that

involve different skills and acting styles. Petruchio is big, broad, full of himself, while M'Tubu is sure of herself as a scientist but less so as a human being."

"She's less comfortable in her own skin, a woman aware of her shortcomings and needs."

JK

### Come together

**E-MERGE(NCY)**, created and directed by Marye Barton, Mark Brose, Rachel Gorman, Kathleen Rockhill, Miriam Rother, Spirit Synott and Kazumi Tsuruoka, performed by all except Rother. Presented by Emerge(nyc) Collective at Artword Theatre. Aug 3 at 9:30 pm, Aug 4 and 6 at 6:30 pm, Aug 7 at 11 pm, Aug 10 at 8 pm, Aug 13 at 3:30 pm.

**Movement** Marye Barton has found a way to channel her theatrical passion and make a political statement at the same time.

A member of the Canadian Mime Theatre in the 70s, Barton has more recently been living with arthritis so severe she was forced to have hip surgery. Then she heard about Body Language, a Toronto Theatre Alliance movement workshop for disabled artists. That 1999 group in turn evolved from an artists' circle called Dis This!

"I could hardly walk at the time, and I wondered how I could participate in something so physical," recalls Barton. "But it turned out to be a dream come true, one that brought back my belief that I could still be a performing artist whose work is based in movement."

Barton and five other artists — both disabled and non-disabled — have collaborated on **E-murge(nyc)**, a performance that functions equally as a statement of art, protest and freedom.

"We're all unique, with an assortment of abilities and also an assortment of personalities," smiles Barton, who's also a playwright and psychotherapist.

"Little by little we began trusting each

### THEATRE

#### WHEN • WHERE

**SUMMERWORKS**, an 11-day festival featuring Toronto theatre companies. Opens today (Thursday, August 3) and runs to August 13 at the Factory Mainspace, Studio and Upstairs (125 Bathurst) and Artword Theatre (75 Portland). \$8, festival pass \$40. For details, see SummerWorks listings (page 73) and festival pullout, 410-1048.

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"My intention in the show is to explore self-determination, self-definition and self-fulfillment. But beyond that, I also want to investigate what it means to be in your body and, by extension, what it means to be human."

Audiences, she points out, accept some limitations but not others from performers who aim to communicate physically.

"They know we can't fly, but some people have trouble with the fact that we can't walk. Still, we can move, express ourselves and dance, and we've discovered that what we do is a profound experience for an audience to share with us."

"It makes a political statement about how disabled people have been hidden away and not integrated into society."

JK

### Country customs

**GIRLS AND HORSES**, by A. Shay Hahn, directed by Karla Faulconbridge, with Emily Hurson, Joe Pingue and Mary Francis Moore. Presented by Mad Craft Habit Theatreworks at the Factory Mainspace. Aug 3 at 9 pm, Aug 5 at 8 pm, Aug 7 at 3:30 pm, Aug 8 at 6 pm, Aug 12 at 12:30 pm, Aug 13 at 6:30 pm.

**Drama** **Karla Faulconbridge** has added a new direction to her career as a designing woman.

Theatre-goers already know her as a talented set designer, with impressive indie credits like Theatre Viscera's Muscle Memory and Mark Longner's velo/city.

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## By JON KAPLAN and GLENN SUMI

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THEATRE • COMEDY • DANCE • PERFORMANCE

## STAGE

## SUMMERWORKS REVIEWS

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**Stamp.** the actors understand how to connect with the characters' emotions and thereby carry us along on their journey. **JK**

### Getting physical

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There's probably no SummerWorks show more moving in its physicality than **E•merge(ncy)**, an empowering collective work by a group of disabled and able theatre artists. Its series of unrelated episodes emphasize the laughter, dreams and sensuality in their lives, elements that most viewers likely haven't considered.

The show isn't a complete success — despite the strong emotions in the occasional text, the spoken segments don't all play out well as theatre — but when **Kathleen Rockhill** balances an exercise ball on her shoulders like a determined Atlas, or when **Rachel Gorman** and **Spirit**

**Synott** perform an elegant, balletic pas de deux sharing a wheelchair, the production takes flight. Some of the dance segments, in fact, should be longer and more developed. A liberating experience for performers and audience alike. **JK**



MAKING MOVES: Spirit Synott (left) and Rachel Gorman get sensual using a wheelchair in the physically expressive E•merge(ncy).

S I A G E

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\* Continued from page 55

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## Nifty noir nightmare

**INDIFFERENT EYES**, by Ben O'Brian, directed by Blaize Melnick and Ken Klosky, with O'Brian, Adam Alllett, Emily Gauthier, Frank Ostello, Andrew Bryan and Carlo Spida. Presented by In the Flesh at Artword, August 10 at 11 pm, August 12 at 3:30 pm, August 13 at 6:30 pm. Rating: NNN

Another student group demonstrates the skills that budding artists are picking up in school drama programs. **Ben O'Brian's Indifferent Eyes** twists and turns with some bizarre plot developments, but the company sustains the script's grimly humorous touch of irony and its sour, noisily tone with committed performances, notably by O'Brian as the narrator and later as a mysterious gangster who heads a multi-purpose firm, and **Adam Alllett** as a one-armed drug addict saddled with a corpse on his living-room floor. Here's a play with plenty of atmos-



MAKING MOVES: Spirit Synott (left) and Rachel Gorman get sensual using a wheelchair in the physically expressive **E-MERGE(NCY)**.

phere, even if the narrative is occasionally jumbled. JK

## No Sanctuary

**SANCTUARY**, by Emil Sher, directed by Colleen Williams, with Jennifer Hall and Adrian Churchill. Presented by Dante Theatre at Factory Mainspace, August 11 at 5 pm, August 13 at 10:30 pm. Rating: NN

It'd be easy to write off **Emil Sher's** symbol-rich play about two lonely souls who meet one morning as obvious and trite. But one extended scene near the end catches us unawares with its thrilling theatricality and genuine emotion. That and **Adrian Churchill's** understated performance as an artist make the show watchable. Jennifer

Hall plays his opposite number at the same obnoxious pitch throughout, and huge patches at the start feel undirected. GS

## Acting out anger

**SPITE**, written and performed by Jean Yoon, Bruce Beaton and Michael Achtmann. Presented by Bitter, Mean & Nasty at Factory Studio, August 10 at 9:30 pm, August 11 at 6:30 pm. Rating: NNN

There's no lack of anger and dramatics in **SPITE**, a trilogy of pieces by a trio of deft theatre performers. The most successful of the works is the funny and sharp title piece, written and performed by **Jean Yoon** — in a white wedding dress with a knife in her heart — who's both fur-

ious and rationalizing about an angst-ridden breakup.

**Bruce Beaton's** narrated "film" **Gas** is clever in its take on the importance of home, if at times too full of detail to follow in a packed, hour-long program. **Michael Achtmann's** three short turns connect with the other material in the show's anti-Harris theme, though Achtmann's drag satires are still in need of shaping and tuning. JK

## Sweet success

**A SWEET PHOEBE**, by Michael Gow, directed by Daryl Cloran, with Colin Glazer and Gema Zamprogna. Presented by Theatrefront at Factory Upstairs, August 11 at 9:30 pm, August 12 at 5 pm, August 13 at 7:30 pm. Rating: NNNN

A cute canine alters the empty lives of a success-oriented couple and makes them more appealing characters in **Michael Gow's Sweet Phoebe**.

Gow and talented director **Daryl Cloran** toy with audience sympathy, surprising us with the characters' contrasting journeys.

**Colin Glazer** and **Gema Zamprogna** (the latter the former wide-eyed Felicity from *Road To Avonlea*) display admirable chemistry, and their growing education is thrilling to watch.

Zamprogna — let's see her do more stage work! — gets so into her role as a woman fascinated by other people's lives that she revitalizes the few clichés in the script and almost makes us forget that the show could be 15 minutes shorter. Definitely worth checking out. GS

## Making Hay

**SHIFTING GEARS**, written and performed by Carolyn Hay, directed by Adrian Truss. Presented by Me Up at Artword, August 11 at 11 pm, August 12 at 9:30 pm. Rating: NN

**Carolyn Hay** puts smoke, lights and a revved-up motorcycle engine to entertaining use in **Shifting Gears**, in which a legal secretary on a cycle sets out to right the wrongs she's unintentionally committed.

Making great use of **Glenn David**son and **David Hoekstra's** all-purpose motorcycle — fitted out with lots of surprising extras — Hay takes us on a road journey of mini-epic proportions, full of nicely realized character sketches and a few sharp curves in the highway. The humour isn't yet as pointed as it undoubtedly will be, but Hay easily ingratiates herself with viewers, and from its midpoint the story barrels home with high-energy vroom. JK

## Bankable Chekhov

**THE FESTIVITIES**, by Anton Chekhov, directed by Jonathan Watton, with Dmitry Chepovetsky, Martin Albert, Nicole Libin, Jillian Hart and Gene Pyrz. Presented by Rushin Productions at Artword, August 11 at 9:30 pm, August 13 at 8 pm. Rating: NNN

**Chekhov's** little-known farce **The Festivities**, which contrasts a whiny, put-upon bookkeeper and an elegant, self-impressed bank manager, gets a generally smart presentation by director **Jonathan Watton**.

**Dmitry Chepovetsky's** performance as the neurotic pencil-pusher — all too aware that he gets no respect for his work — anchors the show, while **Martin Albert's** pompous manager expecting ceremonial adulation offers a balloon that's impossible not to pop. They're alter egos, each high-strung in his own way.

The female characters aren't nearly as solidly played. Even though they're farcical, they require a humanity that **Jillian Hart** and **Nicole Libin** fail to capture. JK

# BRAVE FILMS, WILD NIGHTS

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## WILD NIGHTS

Only circle your choice for the correct answer.

1. Canadian producer Robert Lantos arrived at the world premiere of **IN PRAISE OF OLDER WOMEN** by what mode of transportation?

- a) Horse-drawn carriage
- b) Harley Davidson
- c) Rickshaw
- d) Subway

2. Which notable Canadian did television's **Six Million Dollar Man**, Lee Majors, publicly pursue while in Toronto for the 1979 Festival?

- a) Margaret Kidder
- b) Margaret Trudeau
- c) Karen Kan
- d) Genevieve Bujold

3. While attending the world premiere of **THE BIG CHILL** in Toronto, who was Glenn Close mistaken for?

- a) a man
- b) Kathleen Turner
- c) Meryl Streep
- d) a theatre usher

4. Who appeared at Robert Duvall's 1983 **Tribute** dressed in a black suit, orange tie and white fedora?

- a) Al Pacino
- b) Liza Minnelli
- c) Francis Ford Coppola
- d) Liberace

5. What Canadian musical group was originally formed to perform at the 1982 Opening Night party, then returned two years later to perform for Warren Beatty's **Tribute** guests at the **Copa**?

- a) The Spoons
- b) The Parachute Club
- c) Platinum Blonde
- d) Glass Tiger

6. Sony Classics' Tom Bernard and Festival Director Wayne Clarkson staged an annual showdown to

determine who would pick up the tab for Sony's guests at the Festival. At what did they compete?

- a) poker
- b) running
- c) tennis
- d) drinking

7. Which of the following never occurred during a Festival screening?

- a) Wild raccoons were discovered in the theatre
- b) The audience refused to leave the theatre until the director apologized for his film
- c) The theatre's ceiling caved in during a torrential downpour
- d) Excited film fans tore out the seats at the theatre

8. Rather than appear on stage for **MILES FROM HOME**, Richard Gere demonstrated greater interest in another pursuit. What was the distraction?

- a) photographing the sunset
- b) meeting Julie Christie
- c) playing the piano
- d) telephoning his mother

9. Quentin Tarantino and Mira Sorvino had one of their first dates at what Festival screening?

- a) Wayne Wang & Paul Auster's **BLUE IN THE FACE**
- b) Wong Kar-wai's **FALLEN ANGELS**
- c) Woody Allen's **MIGHTY APHRODITE**
- d) John Woo's **HARD-BOILED**

10. What filmmaker taught Festival Director Helga Stephenson how to shoot a gun?

- a) Jean-Claude Lauzon
- b) John Frankenheimer
- c) Sylvia Chang
- d) Paul Schrader

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# SummerWorks reviewed

*Our critics cover all shows at 10th annual new-play fest*

## ARTWORD THEATRE

75 PORTLAND

### BETWEEN EX & ZED

Featuring Tamila Zaslavsky, Debra Felstead, Blake Wiswell. Written and directed by Tamila Zaslavsky. August 12 & 13, 5pm. ★★  
Tamila Zaslavsky's *Between Ex & Zed* is a curious play, interspersing dance with theatrical episodes. It isn't until the conclusion that the dance component is understandable as anything more than an interesting visual element. And that's not the only way Zaslavsky messes with the audience's heads — *Between Ex & Zed* is a drama in which what appears to be real isn't at all: what begins as a simple story about two strangers with little in common becomes a psychological case study. Unfortunately, a lackluster script — offering no convincing explanation as to why the key female characters would be friends — and unremarkable acting don't live up to the heavy subject matter of this earnest but ineffective effort. — JH

### EMERGE(NCY)

Featuring Marye Barton, Spirit Synott, Kazumi Tsuruoka. Written by the company. Directed by Miriam Rother. August 10, 8pm; August 13, 3:30pm. ★★★

By turns beautiful, inspirational and completely befuddling, *Emerge(ncy)* is a movement-based "performance of protest and freedom" by an ensemble cast of disabled and non-disabled actors. When it works — as in the love scene between Spirit Synott and Mark Brose, or in Marye Barton's monologue about trying to take a shower with dignity in a hospital where the needs of the patients are of little concern — *Emerge(ncy)* is an empowering, cathartic achievement. Unfortunately, such highlights are framed by scenes — as in the episode in which people hurry by a spotlighted area, glance down and mutter "shit" — that confused the heck out of me. Still, in spite of some weak moments, this is an engaging, completely unique piece of theatre. — JH

### THE EROTIC CURVE OF THE EARTH

Featuring Hume Baugh, Greg Campbell. Written and directed by Conrad Alexandrowicz. August 11, 6:30pm; August 12, 2pm; August 13, 12:30pm. ★★★★

To anyone who's ever had a broken heart (and that's everyone) — you might think the

### REVIEWS BY

Kamal Al-Solaylee, Kevin Connolly, Joanne Huff, Don Mosley and Rebecca Todd

All Shows \$8.  
SummerWorks Hotline: 410-1048

wounds have healed, but Hume Baugh's portrayal of Stan, the ex-lover who just can't let go, will show you just how fresh they still are. Stan's a mess: a great, invertebrate blob of misery, loneliness and self-pity. Roger was the best thing that ever happened to him. He can't move on and he can't forget — all those damn hurtin' songs on the radio won't let him. Or us. The only solace he finds is from Finbar,

the patron saint of breakups. Baugh makes Stan's agonies real and immediate, and Greg Campbell, in multiple roles, is amazing in this very funny, visceral show. — DM

### THE FESTIVITIES

Featuring Martin Albert, Jillian Hart, Dmitry Chepovetsky. Written by Anton Chekhov. Directed by Jonathan Watton. August 11, 9:30pm; August

13, 8pm. ★★★

Rushin Productions' version of Chekhov's little-performed farce is an exercise in stamina — especially for the actors. Dmitry Chepovetsky's turn as the downtrodden misogynist Kuzma Nikolayevich Heerin is an inspired study in seething lunacy, while Martin Albert makes the vainglorious bank manager, Andrey Andreievich Shipuchin, smarmy

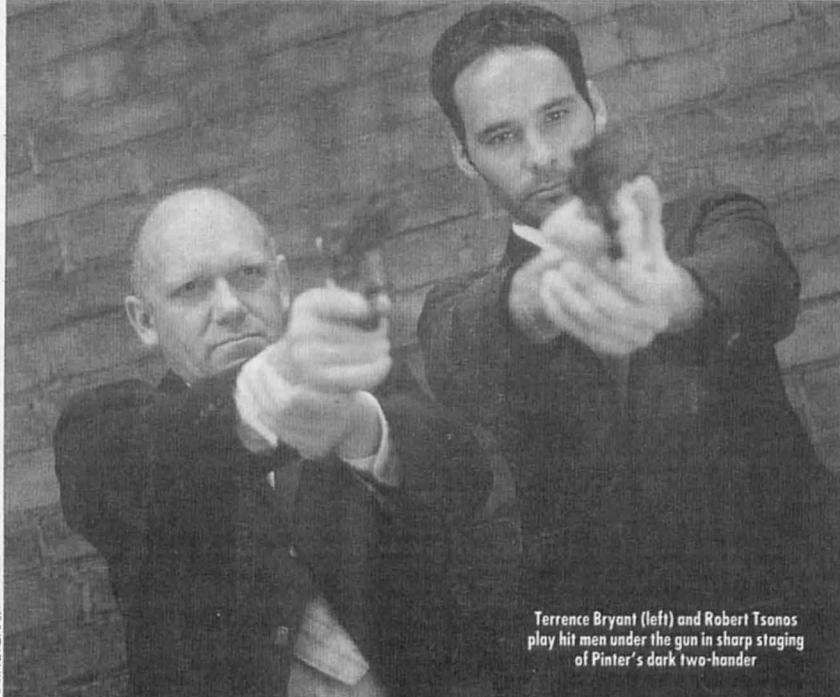
enough to make your flesh crawl. *The Festivities* is a rather misanthropic play — the premise being that, while women ruin everything, men are clearly insane — and it's understandable why it isn't staged as often as *The Cherry Orchard* or *Uncle Vanya*. Still, this is a well-staged, well-performed production of a play that, while not classic Chekhov, is interesting in its own right. — JH

### THE FLAT PRINCE: A TALE OF RAPUNZEL

Featuring Keith Barker, Joel Benson, Michaela Hayek. Written and directed by Darcy Murphy. August 10 & 13, 9:30pm; August 11, 8pm. ★★  
Put simply, *The Flat Prince* is awfully strange. Subtitled *A Tale of Rapunzel*, it could just as easily have been called *The Handsome Prince Goes to Hell*. The prince (Joel Benson) is thrust into the real world by Rapunzel's guardian, Mother Goethel (Michaela Hayek), to learn some humility or die trying. What follows (life on a farm, being beaten while having sex with a panhandler) gives him a new perspective, but is it enough to change this privileged man? Well, maybe, but — regardless of some enthusiastic performances and fine direction — the play doesn't really give us any reason to care one way or another. Updating fairy tales may make for a fun writing exercise, but it's rare that the outcome has any lasting value. Murphy has some good ideas, but in this context they're largely wasted. — JH

### IN MY HOUSE

Featuring Ryna Schickler, Mike Davidson, Sean Tyson. Written and directed by Tom Pickering. August 10 & 11, 5pm; August 12, 8pm. ★★

ANITA ZYONAR  
  
Terrence Bryant (left) and Robert Tsinos play hit men under the gun in sharp staging of Pinter's dark two-hander

## Pinter classic retains its clout

### THE DUMB WAITER

Featuring Terrence Bryant, Robert Tsinos. Written by Harold Pinter. Directed by Kelly Thornton. August 12, 8pm; August 13, 12:30pm. Factory Theatre Mainstage, 125 Bathurst. ★★★★

While those involved in this cut-above SummerWorks effort can't claim much credit for the script — a classic two-hander from Brit legend Harold Pinter — they can for their choices, which leave the play's most intriguing questions open without fudging on key issues of character and motivation.

The script's intriguing hook — which puts hit-men-on-the-verge-of-a-nervous-breakdown Ben (Terrence Bryant) and Gus (Robert Tsinos) alone in a basement room, waiting on a call from the

boss — only masks the play's real strength as a quiet, tightly paced character study firmly rooted in Pinter's peerless dialogue. By the time the room's ramshackle dumbwaiter (its arrival announced each time with jarring, gunshot raps) begins delivering requests for meals from a kitchen that doesn't exist, most of what we need to know has already been established.

Director Kelly Thornton choreographs the interaction between the twitchy Gus and his laconic senior partner beautifully, quietly using costume and body language so that the scene plays more like a protective ritual revisited by an old married couple than the developing cat-and-mouse game between

unequal partners it might have been.

There are rough spots with the language — enough to make you wonder about the wisdom of retaining some of the more idiosyncratic vocabulary and references, seeing as the English accents have largely been dropped. But the chemistry between the actors is palpable and the timing crisp and natural.

As the tension builds and the no-nonsense set transforms from realistic bunker to perplexing, menacing trap, the production's unbroken string of smart choices begins to pay dividends. Thornton and company have not just tackled a classic, they've by-and-large lived up to it — rare air for any staging of Pinter, let alone one at SummerWorks. — KC

### INDIFFERENT EYES

Featuring Ben O'Brian, Adam Alllett, Emily Gauthier. Written by Ben O'Brian. Directed by Ken Klosky and Blake Melnick. August 10, 11pm; August 12, 3:30pm; August 13, 6:30pm. ★★★

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arts